

'Legality' of Cuban Action Is Discussed by Fulbright

Is the arms "quarantine" of Cuba legal, under standards of international law?

A Little Rock University student asked the question of Sen. J. William Fulbright yesterday. Fulbright—just back from an emergency meeting in Washington on the Cuban crisis—was addressing LRU students and faculty in the field house. The program was sponsored by Young Democrats.

Fulbright's first response to the question was to remark that it was a "very difficult" one. Then he explained that use of the word

"law" in this context is a "rather loose use."

Emphasizing "we have not declared war on Cuba yet," Fulbright went on to say that "we make a very good case that this (quarantine) is legal" under principles of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

"Under authority of those two documents," he said, "I would say it is legal."

What he called "selective quarantine" gives the action "the color of legality."

Fulbright said he would not speculate at all on the outcome of the current crisis, because the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should not speculate.

Earlier, he said he did not want to make any assumptions about the situation because there was no need "to make the President's job harder."

He did say that Russia controls the missiles in Cuba, not Cubans, and that "the Russians wouldn't wish to give Cubans the power of involving them in all-out war."

This statement seems to indicate, at least in Fulbright's opinion, that the Russians won't be turning the bases over to Cubans later—or at least not soon.

He made this statement:

"If negotiations don't develop from the present crisis, then we'll be forced to reject the bases, either by bombing or invasion."

He emphasized he was not predicting an invasion.

What about our bases in Turkey?

Fulbright said there's quite a difference. The bases in Turkey are "clearly not there for offensive purposes," he explained, saying that Russia had already shown intentions to create a vast empire when the bases were established. And Russia, Fulbright continued, is engaged in "the only modern empire building going on."

Summarizing that point, he said, "Those bases are not offensive in purpose (our bases in Turkey) and therefore the matters are not comparable."

Anyway, the bases in Turkey are "obsolescent" if not "obsolete," Fulbright said, and the United States — without any pressure — is dismantling the Thor bases in England now because they are obsolete.

Raps Opponent

Fulbright said his Republican opponent has been saying he withdrew air cover from the ill-fated invasion of Cuba a year ago.

Fulbright branded the statement as an "absolute misstatement of fact" and said that what he had to say about the invasion he said 10 days before it happened. And even then he offered only an opinion.

About that invasion, Fulbright told the group, mostly young Democrats, that "this operation (the invasion) was planned a year before President Kennedy came to office, under the administration of Central Intelligence Agency head Allen Dulles. It was during the Republican administration of President Eisenhower.